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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2035

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: (S/NF) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON LEADERSHIP
SUCCESSION IN LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: BEIRUT 000972

Classified By: ELISSA G. PITTERLE, DIRECTOR, INR/OPS

[1](#)1. (S/NF) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ARE INTERESTED IN SUCCESSION IN PROMINENT LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES THAT MIGHT EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AND HOW THESE CHANGES COULD ALTER THE LEBANESE POLITICAL SCENE. WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN AMAL; THE FREE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT (FPM); THE PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY; AND KITAEB (THE PHALANGISTS), BECAUSE OF THE SIZE AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THESE PARTIES AND THE AGE AND HEALTH OF THEIR LEADERS. WE HAVE RESEARCHED LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESSION REPORTING FROM THE PAST YEAR AND HAVE TAILORED REQUIREMENTS TO EACH PARTY'S INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON SUCCESSION, PARTICULARLY ON THE QUESTIONS BELOW, AS TIME AND RESOURCES PERMIT.

[1](#)2. (U) AMAL

[1](#)A. (S/NF) WHO ARE THE LIKELY SUCCESSORS TO NABIH BERRI? WHAT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTY AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO PREPARE FOR SUCCESSION?

[1](#)B. (S/NF) WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP? WOULD BERRI CONSIDER RETIRING?

[1](#)C. (S/NF) WILL AMAL TRY TO ENSURE ONE OF ITS MEMBERS REPLACES BERRI AS SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IF BERRI DIES OR BECOMES INCAPACITATED? ARE HIZBALLAH OR THE SHIA INDEPENDENTS PLANNING TO TRY TO ASSUME THE SPEAKERSHIP AFTER BERRI'S DEATH OR INCAPACITATION?

[1](#)D. (S/NF) IF BERRI DIES OR BECOMES INCAPACITATED, WILL THE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED JOBS OR AID BECAUSE OF THEIR CONNECTIONS TO HIM LOSE THESE BENEFITS?

[1](#)E. (S/NF) DO AMAL MEMBERS THINK THE PARTY WILL RETAIN ITS MEMBERSHIP AFTER BERRI IS NO LONGER LEADER?

[1](#)3. (U) FREE PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT (FPM)

[1](#)A. (S/NF) IS MICHEL AWN CONSIDERING ANYONE OTHER THAN HIS SON-IN-LAW, GIBRAN BASSIL, AS HIS SUCCESSOR? HOW, IF AT ALL, IS BASSIL ATTEMPTING TO COUNTER HIS UNPOPULARITY WITHIN THE PARTY?

[1](#)B. (S/NF) ARE THERE OTHER PARTY MEMBERS WHO WANT TO COMPETE WITH BASSIL FOR LEADERSHIP? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTY AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO IMPROVE THEIR CHANCES FOR SUCCESSION? ARE FPM MEMBERS DOING ANYTHING TO COUNTER BASSIL'S SUCCESSION?

[1](#)C. (S/NF) WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP? WOULD AWN CONSIDER RETIRING FROM HIS POSITION?

[1](#)D. (S/NF) IS AWN OR BASSIL SEEKING HELP FROM SYRIA TO BOLSTER BASSIL AS AWN'S SUCCESSOR?

1E. (S/NF) WHAT DO FPM MEMBERS THINK THE PARTY'S ROLE WILL BE AFTER AWW IS NO LONGER LEADER? ARE MEMBERS WORRIED ABOUT LOSING MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER CHRISTIAN PARTIES, AND DO OTHER CHRISTIAN PARTIES AIM TO RECRUIT FPM MEMBERS?

14. (U) PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY

1A. (S/NF) ARE THERE ANY OTHER SERIOUS CANDIDATES FOR SUCCESSORS TO WALID JUNBLATT BESIDES HIS SON, TAYMOUR? IF SO, WHO, AND WHAT ARE THEIR LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS?

1B. (S/NF) WOULD JUNBLATT EVER RETIRE FROM PARTY LEADERSHIP? WHAT ARE THE PARTY PROCEDURES FOR SUCCESSION?

1C. (S/NF) WHAT ARE JUNBLATT'S PLANS FOR SOLIDIFYING TAYMOUR'S LEADERSHIP ROLE WITHIN THE PARTY? HOW ARE PARTY MEMBERS AND LEADERS REACTING TO TAYMOUR?

1D. (S/NF) ARE PARTY LEADERS AND MEMBERS WORRIED ABOUT LOSING STANDING AMONG THE DRUZE OR THE NATION IF TAYMOUR ASSUMES LEADERSHIP? IF SO, WHY, AND HOW WOULD THEY TRY TO COUNTERACT A POTENTIAL DROP IN STANDING?

1E. (S/NF) HAS JUNBLATT REACHED OUT TO HIS RIVAL, TALAL ARSLAN, TO ENSURE THAT ARSLAN WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE IN TAYMOUR'S SUCCESSION? HAS ARSLAN EXPRESSED ANY VIEWS ABOUT TAYMOUR ASSUMING A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

1F. (S/NF) ARE ANY FOREIGN ACTORS-ESPECIALLY SYRIA-ATTEMPTING TO INTERVENE IN THE DRUZE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES?

1G. (S/NF) WHAT ARE TAYMOUR'S VIEWS TOWARD THE PARTY ALIGNING ITSELF WITH THE WEST OR WITH SYRIA AND IRAN? WHAT ARE HIS VIEWS ON ALLIANCES WITH THE 14 MARCH OR 8 MARCH COALITIONS?

15. (U) KITAEB (THE PHALANGISTS)

1A. (S/NF) WHO ARE THE POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO AMINE GEMAYEL FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP? WHAT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS, AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO POSITION THEMSELVES? WHAT ARE THE PARTY PROCEDURES FOR SUCCESSION?

1B. (S/NF) WHO DOES AMINE GEMAYEL WANT AS HIS SUCCESSOR, AND HOW IS HE POSITIONING THAT PERSON FOR SUCCESSION? IS HE UNDER PRESSURE TO NAME A SUCCESSOR? WOULD HE CONSIDER RETIRING?

1C. (S/NF) ARE PARTY LEADERS OR MEMBERS WORRIED THAT A POWER STRUGGLE FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP WOULD HURT THE PARTY'S NATIONAL STANDING OR THAT WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY? ARE THERE PLANS TO TRY TO COUNTER A DECLINE IN STANDING? ARE OTHER CHRISTIAN PARTIES PLANNING TO CAPITALIZE ON GEMAYEL'S DEPARTURE FROM PARTY LEADERSHIP?
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